(ii) Fairs and exhibitions will be organized in the country periodically so that decorative stones available in the State may get the desired publicity. Visits to national and international trade fairs, exhibitions and seminars will also be organized both for potential exporters and Government functionaries, which is expected to give the entrepreneures an opening in the national/international markets and provide a fillip to exports.

Free trade agreement with Sri Lanka

61. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India and Sri Lanka have agreed to expand the Free Trade Agreement and propose to include the service sector too in it;

(b) whether it is also a fact that preliminary studies are underway to have a road bridge between the two countries; and

(c) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY) :

(a) to (c) During the visit of Sri Lankan Prime Minister to India between June 8-12-2002, it was agreed to set up a Task Force for "FTA II and Beyond" to include the service sector and impart renewed impetus and synergy to the FTA, and also to inititate a multi-disciplinary feasibility study regarding the proposed land bridge between the two countries. At the Senior Officials Meeting under the India Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement held in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 4—5 July, 2002 both sides have further agreed to communicate to each other the composition of Task Force, Sri Lanka undertook to prepare a concept paper with regard to "FTA II & Beyond" and the draft Terms of Reference, for the Task Force.

Import of leather item from India

62. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that certain countries have decided not to import leather items from India on account of bad treatment given to such cattle while they are on transit;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what steps Government have taken to improve the plight of animals while they are on transit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY) :

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) To imporve the plight of animals while they are on transit. Government has made concerted and coordinated efforts, with involvement of State Government, for ensuring strict compliance of the provisions under the Prevention of Cruelty Act, 1960.

Rise in duty drawback

63. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have recently revised the rates of duty drawback on several items;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government are aware that the cut in drawback rates for woven and knitted garments would have dampening effect on the export of these items which will receive a severe set back; and

(d) if so, the corrective steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY) :

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The duty drawback rates in respect of various export products are revised annually. While revising these rates, the budgetary changes effected in the duties of Customs and Central Excise suffered on the inputs used in the manufacture of the export goods are duly reflected in the rates. These details are available in the Duty Drawback Table, 2002-2003, notified by the Ministry of Finance *vide* Notification No. 33/2002-Cus. (N.T.) dated 29-5-2002.